

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3162

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0018

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS AO

SUBJECT: SUMMIT ISSUES

REF: LUANDA 0007 AND 0013 (NOTAL)

1. I TALKED ON JANUARY THREE WITH HIGH COMMISSIONER ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO ABOUT THE SUMMIT MEETING TO BE HELD IN PORTUGAL ON JANUARY TEN. THE ADMIRAL WILL ATTEND AND HE AGREED TO SEE ME ON HIS RETURN TO GIVE ME A RUNDOWN. IN OUR CONVERSATION THE ADMIRAL TOUCHED ON THE THREE KEY AREAS OF DISCUSSION AT THE MOMBASA CONFERENCE - CABINET, DEFENSE AND THE ECONOMY.

2. IN OUR TELEGRAM 0013 OF JANUARY SIX I RELATED PRESS REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WANT SEVENTEEN MINISTERS IN THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PORTUGUESE WILL TRY TO HOLD THE NUMBER TO TWELVE. THIS IS ESSENTIALLY TRUE. THE ADMIRAL TOLD ME THE PORTUGUESE WANT A MAXIMUM OF TWELVE MINISTERS; MORE THAN THAT WILL MAKE THE GOVERNMENT UNWIELDLY, AS POWERS AND
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RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE SO COMPARTMENTALIZED AMONG THE THREE

GROUPS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE PARALYZED. ROSA COUTINHO SEES LITTLE HOPE THAT THE THREE CAN AGREE ON A PRIME MINISTER. A MORE LIKELY PROSPECT, HE SAID, IS A COLLEGIAL GROUP OF THREE VICE PRIME MINISTERS. IF THE LIBERATION GROUPS INSIST UPON A LARGE NUMBER OF HIGH LEVEL POSTS FOR THEMSELVES, THE PORTUGUESE PLAN TO COUNTER WITH AN OFFER OF THREE VICE PRIME MINISTERS, FOUR SENIOR MINISTERS (ONE PORTUGUESE) AND AS MANY SECRETARIES AS THE GROUPS WANT TO NAME. AS THE DEPARTMENT WILL READILY PERCEIVE, THIS IS A MORE COMPLEX VERSION OF A PLAN THE ADMIRAL MENTIONED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM IN NOVEMBER AND WHICH LATER WAS UNFORTUNATELY ANNOUNCED BY MINISTER FOR INTERTERRITORIAL COORDINATION ALMEIDA SANTO AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

3. IN DEFENSE MATTERS, PRESS REPORTS FROM MOMBASA INDICATE THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS CONCEIVE A THIRTY THOUSAND MAN ARMED FORCE COMPOSED OF EQUAL NUMBER FROM EACH LIBERATION GROUP; THE PORTUGUESE ARE TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL THIRTY THOUSAND TROOPS, WHO WILL BE OBLIGED TO LEAVE FOUR MONTHS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. THIS CONCEPT DIFFERS FROM THAT EXPRESSED TO ME BY THE ADMIRAL, WHO TOLD ME THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED TO KEEP PORTUGUESE TROOPS ON AFTER INDEPENDENCE. AS FOR THE MECHANICS OF THE NEW ARMY, HE ENVISAGES A SYSTEM IN WHICH LINE UNITS, ESPECIALLY PATROLS, ARE MADE UP OF THE LIBERATION GROUPS AND PORTUGUESE TROOPS IN EQUAL NUMBER, THAT IS, EACH GROUP AND THE PORTUGUESE WILL SUPPLY ONE-FOURTH OF THE MANPOWER.

4. ON THE ECONOMY, THE LIBERATION LEADERS AT MOMBASA CALLED UPON PORTUGAL TO TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO END THE CURRENT PARALYSIS AND GET THINGS MOVING. ROSA COUTINHO AND HIS ADVISORS HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THIS FOR SOME TIME. THE ADMIRAL SAID HE HOPES TO PROMULGATE SHORTLY AN ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 1975 TOTALLING TWO AND ONE HALF MILLION CONTOS (ONE CONTO EQUALS APPROXIMATELY FORTY U.S. DOLLARS AT THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE). HE WANTS NOT ONLY TO GET THE PUBLIC SECTOR MOVING, BUT ALSO TO COMMIT THE LIBERATION GROUPS BEFORE THEY TAKE OFFICE. IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE CURRENT DEPRESSED SITUATION IS THE RESULT OF POLITICAL UNCERTAINTIES AND A RESOLUTION WILL DEPEND LARGELY UPON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE LIBERATION GROUPS TAKE HOLD HERE AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

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5. ONE IMPORTANT QUESTION THAT WILL BE DECIDED AT THE SUMMIT IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE ADMIRAL. HE IS DISLIKED BY FNLA AND WHITES; BY FNLA BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE HIM TO FAVOR THE MPLA AND BY WHITES BECAUSE THIS ONCE PROTECTED MINORITY HEARTILY DISLIKES BEING OUT IN THE COLD AND HAS FIXED UPON THE ADMIRAL AS THEIR DEVIL. THE SIMPLEMINDED THESIS THAT THE ADMIRAL IS A COMMUNIST HAS GREAT CURRENCY AMONG ANGOLAN WHITES AND PORTUGUESE, AS WELL AS AMONG

MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY AND CONSULAR CORPS, AMONG WHOM
POLITICAL ACUMEN IS IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY. ROSA COUTINHO DOES HAVE
SUPPORT IN THE MPLA, ALTHOUGH THEY TOO, COMPLAIN ABOUT FAVORITISM
ON HIS PART TOWARD OTHER GROUPS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE ADMIRAL
THAT JONAS SAVIMBI IS THE BEST OF THE LOT AND LOOKS TO HIM TO
PLAY THE LEADING ROLE IN GUIDING ANGOLA THROUGH THE DIFFICULT
MONTHS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD. AFTER THE ADMIRAL WAS NAMED ACTING
HIGH COMMISSIONER HE TOLD ME HE WOULD STAY ON AT LEAST UNTIL
THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE, AT WHICH TIME HIS FATE WOULD BE
DECIDED. HE IS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HIS PROSPECTS FOR REMAINING
AS HIGH COMMISSIONER. HE RECOGNIZES HIS IS A NO WIN SITUATION,
ACCEPTS IT PHILOSOPHICALLY AND REPORTS THAT HE SLEEPS WELL
AT NIGHT.
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